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Advances in Methodology in Poland: Abstracts of *Ask: Research and Methods* in English, 1995–2007

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Ask: Research and Methods is an open access, peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to the methodology of social science research. ASK was first published in 1995 by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Before 2008, ASK followed the tradition of other Polish language scientific journals by publishing short English language summaries of the articles. These summaries, available in the back issues of ASK, cover only a small portion of what the article is about. To provide more information about advances in Polish methodology as published in ASK from the early stages of the post-Communist era to the mid-2000s, we decided to translate the abstracts themselves. Funded by a grant from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, we translated into English all abstracts published in ASK from 1995 to 2007.

INTRODUCTION

Ask: Research and Methods is an open access, peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to the methodology of social science research. ASK was first published in 1995 by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN). In the premiere issue, the editor noted that ASK was created because there was no such social science methods journal produced in Poland.

Since then, much has changed in ASK, but one thing did not: ASK remains the only journal produced by a Polish institution dedicated to publishing research on a wide array of methodological issues in the social sciences.

The first English-language articles appeared in 2007, and since 2008, ASK publishes exclusively in English. In 2012, ASK obtained a grant from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education for the internationalization and digitization of ASK. We expanded the editorial board that advises ASK, hired managing editors, and digitized all issues of ASK from 1995 to the present, all of which can be found at ASK's website, askresearchandmethods.org.

In 2014, ASK entered a co-publishing arrangement with The Ohio State University (OSU) and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. This co-publishing agreement was made possible by the organizational support of Cross-national Studies: Interdisciplinary Research and Training Program (CONSIRT.osu.edu). The purpose of the arrangement was move ASK from primarily paper-distribution to open access. ASK's primary distribution now occurs free, on-line, and funded by IFiS PAN and OSU, public institutions interested in the advancement of science.

Before 2008, ASK followed the tradition of other Polish language scientific journals by publishing short English language summaries of the articles. These summaries, available in the back issues of ASK, cover only a small portion of what the article is about. To provide more information about advances in Polish methodology as published in ASK from the early stages of the post-Communist era to the mid-2000s, we decided to translate the abstracts themselves.

Funded by a grant from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, we translated into English all abstracts published in ASK from 1995 to 2007. The translator was Ania Purisch. Key words first appeared in ASK in 2006. Inna Bell provided, *ex post*, the key words for each article from 1995 to 2005.

ASK: RESEARCH AND METHODS ARTICLE ABSTRACTS 1995–2007

Social studies in the 1990s. Continuum and change

1995, vol. 1, pp. 7–24

Henryk Domański, Zbigniew Sawiński, Franciszek Sztabiński, and Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This article gives an overview of the newest tendencies in social studies in Poland as well as of basic issues still present in daily research, which nonetheless remain pertinent. The following subjects will be discussed: the expansive development of public opinion and marketing research, the growing participation of Polish

sociologists in international research projects, the need for codifying research ethics rules, archiving problems and new data collection techniques and computer processing.

Key words: public opinion, marketing research, data collection, computer assisted analysis, ethics

**The ban on the publication of public opinion polls in the campaign of 1993.
Law and reality**

1995, vol. 1, pp. 25–36

Antoni Sulek, Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw

During the parliamentary elections (to the Sejm, the lower chamber of Parliament) of 1993 the ban on publishing polling results became a contentious matter already in the course of parliamentary works on the electoral system. During the campaign, its validity was the subject of public debate. The ban was circumvented, broken, and even abused. In this paper, I show how the ban on publishing opinion polls came into being and how it functioned during the campaign of 1993. I also formulate a number of conclusions based on these experiences. I rely on newspaper articles, television and radio broadcasts, as well as documents from the Parliament, State Electoral Committee, and Supreme Court.

Key words: public opinion; election; parliamentary election; political campaign; legal ban on publishing polling results

The problem of the sponsor of survey research in Poland

1995 vol. 1, pp. 37–47

Zygmunt Gostowski, Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz

Starting from the assumption that voicing one's views on a given subject is a form of social behavior conditioned by feelings of group belonging and a presumption about the addressee of such views, the author examines the various possible types of influence such an assumption might have on the behavior and answers given by respondents. This issue is strongly connected to the fact that the survey designers expressly forbid revealing the sponsor's name to the respondents – in accordance with the international code of survey practice. The author questions the legitimacy of this ban both because of moral and social implications as well for the sake of research and substance. Indeed, he believes that knowledge of the survey client anchors the answers of the respondent socially, giving them the value of authentic, socially-addressed verbal behavior. The article presents a number of hypotheses

regarding the influence that knowledge of the sponsor's identity may have on the substance of opinions obtained in the interview and announces that results of further research aimed at verifying these hypotheses will be presented in future papers.

Key words: survey research; respondent behavior; disclosure of sponsor's identity

Survey research quality control: Questions and answers

1995, vol. 1, pp. 49–60

Franciszek Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This paper is devoted to the question of quality controlling the work of survey interviewers. Quality control is treated as one element in a number of steps aimed at improving the quality standards of work performed by interviewers and the material gathered. I argue that there should be three basic questions on the axis organizing quality control: (1) What to control? (a question about control subject matter), (2) How much to control? (a question about scope), (3) How to control? (a methodological question). Depending on the answers given, and the solutions implemented, one can point to a dozen available control study schemes. And finally, when making a choice, it is worth remembering one last question about the credibility of the collected data: What is the potential value of quality control data?

Key words: surveys; interview; data quality

Why occupation? Problems with the measurement of social position in sociological research

1995, vol. 1, pp. 61–80

Henryk Domański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

In sociological analyses, occupation is the most frequently used indicator of the social position of individuals. This article presents a number of arguments in support of this approach:

(1) theoretical arguments in whose light professional differentiation constitutes an important axis along which the contemporary world divides, (2) data from empirical analyses proving the validity of the occupational indicator, (3) some remarks on the subject of its usefulness at the stage of data gathering and analysis. This paper is the first in a series devoted to perfecting indicators of professional position currently in use in Polish sociology.

Key words: occupation; surveys; social stratification; social status

The interviewer effect: Does it only affect the respondent?

1995, vol. 1, pp. 81–99

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

When analyzing how an interview (that is, the situation itself) affects the quality of the data obtained, one must not only bear in mind the influence that the interviewer exerts on the respondent, but also the influence of the respondent on the interviewer. This article presents analyses of data from research on deviant behavior in young people in 1993 which allows us to conclude that the influence goes both ways: after having been in contact with the respondents, the interviewers changed their opinions concerning the topics discussed in the survey and their expectations of the answers of the respondents. The author believes that the shifting opinions and expectations of the interviewers can in turn be transferred onto more respondents thus creating a secondary interviewer effect that cannot be traced at the level of the entire sample. In other words, the response bias resulting from the interviewer effect has much broader consequences than it would appear from an analysis of the interviewer effect alone.

Key words: survey research; interview; data quality control; response bias; interviewer effect

The influence of question phrasing on questionnaire responses

1995, vol. 2, pp. 7–19

Jean-Paul Grémy, Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Sécurité Intérieure, Paris, France

Beginning with 1987, a number of split ballot experiments were conducted in France concerning the effects of question phrasing on survey research data. The main findings of these experiments concern such problems as how to include a mid-scale (such as “undecided” or “don’t know”) response, the effect of intonation when asking questions and the order in which questions appear in a questionnaire. Analyses show to what degree these elements affect answers given by respondents during an interview.

Key words: survey research; split ballot experiments; scales; response bias; don’t know and refusals

Why agree to an interview? Problems of interview arrangement in survey research

1995, vol. 2, pp. 21–35

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The goal of interview arrangement is to provide the respondent with specific information about the research and to convince him to participate. Basing on empirical studies, the article shows (1) the reasons why respondents agree to take part in the survey, (2) the susceptibility of different categories of respondents to different arguments. The article also suggests to what extent arguments used during interview arrangement can influence the validity of answers provided during the interviews.

Key words: survey research; interviews; refusals; validity

Interviewer qualities and the credibility of data collected in questionnaire surveys

1995, vol. 2, pp. 37–52

Aleksandra Dukaczewska, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This paper is devoted to the interviewer effect in survey research. It attempts to gauge the scope of the phenomenon based on data from the third edition of the Polish General Social Survey and information about specific qualities of interviewers. The following qualities were taken into account: sex, age, marital status, level and profile of education, as well as experience in conducting interviews. Analyses show that each interviewer quality, taken on its own, has little correlation with the answers from respondents, but that the “general” interviewer effect, understood to be a percentage of the variance explained by interviewer qualities is very high and amounts to 11–27% for questions about facts, 39–63% for questions about opinions. The author believes that part of these findings can likely be explained by apparent correlations connected to those aspects of the interview which were not taken into account in the analyses.

Key words: Polish General Social Survey (PGSS); interview; response bias; interviewer effect

Occupational classification in social research

1995, vol. 2, pp. 53–75

Zbigniew Sawiński, Lutay H.C., *Komputerowa Obsługa Gromadzenia i Przetwarzania Danych Badawczych*

In the same way occupation is the basic variable in social research, occupational classification is the basic tool for gathering and analyzing data on occupational differentiation. In simple cases, classification is included in the form of a simple closed question in the information gathering tool. More often, however, the goal is to collect more specific information about occupation which will then be codified, and the names of occupations attributed to selected classification categories. The article discusses the different classifications of occupation used in social research in Poland, which were mostly developed for the use of national statistics. It further presents the assumptions behind social classification, namely the tools created for the identification of the basic segments of the class-stratum structure. In conclusion, I present remarks on the compatibility of different classifications used in social research.

Key words: occupational differentiation; data analysis; social stratification.

Polish sociological occupational classification (PSKZ-95): A research proposal

1995, vol. 2, pp. 77–93

Zbigniew Sawiński and **Henryk Domański**, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Occupation is the most basic and frequently-used indicator of the place occupied by people within the social structure. We recommend a new Polish Sociological Occupational Classification Standard (Polska Socjologiczna Klasyfikacja Zawodów – PSKZ-95) adjusted to reflect changes in the socio-professional structure in Poland in recent years. The need to disseminate a new pattern for occupational coding and new data analysis tools arises from the fact that the patterns currently used in sociological research require considerable modifications – they were devised in the 1970s, and reflected a different structure of Polish society. The article further gives a description of PSKZ-95, alongside its substantive and methodological basis, and then discusses its formal structure and points to the possibility of using computer-assisted data coding for PSKZ-95.

Key words: SKZ Scores; classification of occupations; data analysis; social stratification; computer assisted coding

Telephone surveys

1996, pp. 7–36

Zbigniew Sawiński, Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw

Telephone surveys as a research tool have come into widespread use since the 1970s with the spread of computer technology. In the second half of the 1980s this method began replacing traditional face to face interviews in many countries. The article discusses the basics of telephone survey organization. An important aspect of this technique is the use of computers with specialized programs containing, among others, the following modules: questionnaire editing, automatic number dialing, assistance with the course of the conversation, management of the course of the session and end data processing. Telephone surveys rely on specific methods for sampling design specifically adapted for this research technique. In comparison with face-to-face interviews, telephone surveys provide a lot more opportunity for controlling the interviewer, who also needs slightly different qualifications and skills. These differences are reflected in the quality of the data gathered in both types of interviews. Finally, the article sketches new perspectives for the development of telephone survey techniques in Poland.

Key words: telephone surveys; computer assisted surveys; data processing

The place of biography in interpretive sociology – Fritz Schütze's biographical sociology program

1996, pp. 37–54

Alicja Rokuszewska-Pawełek, Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz

The article presents a short survey of the trends and changes in interpretive approaches in the study of biography. In this context, I present Fritz Schütze's theoretical and methodological conception, one of the most influential and developed proposals within this field of sociology. I will discuss in turn the basic tenets and theoretical categories of this perspective, the specific data collection technique (narrative interview), the analytical method linked to its processing and the main direction for empirical studies.

Key words: biography; narrative interview

Estimating and controlling the influence of the research center in analyses of the dynamics of social moods

1996, pp. 55–70

Andrzej Klarkowski, Wydział Psychologii UW, Zespół Analiz i Prognoz URM

Using the results of public opinion polls conducted in Poland after 1990, seven opinion indicators that were estimated for at least 12 months in parallel on representative samples by at least two different research centers have been selected. The level of similarity of the size of indicators measured at the same time and the similarity of the dynamics of value change have been described. The level of similarity confirms the validity and credibility of the research centers. Although different centers estimate the values of the indicators similarly, estimating changes carries a higher margin of error. Variance analyses with the dependent variable set as the indicator values and invariable variables as the time of measurement and the research firm results in statistically significant systematic disparities between the results obtained by the different firms. Using variance analysis in the case of a research program conducted in parallel by two research institutions (identical tools, equivalent samples, similar realization time) has confirmed the appearance of systematic difference in the results (the survey center effect).

The presence of the survey center effect in public opinion measurements justifies the use of parallel surveys in the case of diagnosis which have significant social importance as well as the use of statistical techniques that allow control of the differences arising from the survey center effect.

Key words: public opinion polls; survey center effect; pollster effect

The stability of responses in sociological research

1996, pp. 71–90

Henryk Domański and **Aleksandra Dukaczewska**, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The article presents the results of our analysis of the stability of information provided by respondents in questionnaire interviews. Stability is treated as an aspect of the reliability of the questions. The authors point to some of the conditionings for change in the respondents' answers and the consequences for the credibility of the information provided. The basis for our findings are to be found in selected questions from two sets of data: The Polish General Social Survey of 1993 and 1994 together with the international module of the Survey Program and research of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Science (PAN) conducted in 1995.

Key words: Polish General Social Survey (PGSS); survey research; questionnaire interview; stability of responses

Polish memoir writing for competitions: Ideology in autobiography, autobiography in ideology

1997, vol. 1–2 (5–6), pp. 9–17

Hanna Palska, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This article is devoted to the ideological context of Polish memoir writing for competitions. The problem is shown through the example of two separate episodes from the history of these competitions, namely a competition for which Józef Chałasiński's *Młode Pokolenie Chłopów* (1938) was produced and the competitions for autobiographies from the early years of the People's Republic of Poland (1948–1956). The ideological tint of the subject matter and of the instructions contained in competition announcements has important methodological consequences. Without questioning the source value of Polish collections of memoirs, I would like to highlight the limitations and the analytical possibilities offered to the researcher studying them.

Key words: memoir competition; ideology; autobiography

The problem of reality in qualitative sociological research. The example of field work

1997, vol. 1–2 (5–6), pp. 19–37

Krzysztof Konecki, Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz

This article is a form of storytelling (introspection) from a sociologist who conducted fieldwork. I will describe the surprises, the epistemological and methodological problems which come with fieldwork. I will depict the intellectual process which includes: a (1) description of the reality under scrutiny (so-called fieldwork stories), (2) the analytical process and the (3) the procedures used (the so-called triangulation procedures) which the researcher uses in fieldwork and during writing up his research report in order to adequately represent the reality under study. The three stages of representing reality overlap creating a single intellectual process, known as fieldwork research.

Key words: qualitative research; fieldwork; triangulation

Methodological reflections of the studies on Holocaust survivors

1997, vol.1–2 (5–6), pp. 39–51

Barbara Engelking-Boni, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Drawing from my experience from studies on Holocaust survivors I point to specific methodological characteristics which appear in this particular type of qualitative studies. They arise from the use of unstructured narrative interviews which in many instances turn into storytelling (in the study examined here, accounts of war experiences). I also discuss the limitations of this technique linked to (1) the fact that the persons involved are not representative of the broader population (2) linguistic and cultural difficulties (3) and the danger of omitting differences in the war stories of the respondents which differentiate their experiences.

Key words: qualitative research; Holocaust; non-representative sample

The interviewer effect in the first stage of questionnaire surveys

1997, vol. 1–2 (5–6), pp. 53–71

Krystyna Lutyńska, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

In the first part of this article I present different approaches to estimating the so-called interviewer effect and I point to those qualities of the interviewer which might influence the respondents. The second part of this article is devoted to an analysis of the relationship between carrying out the interviews and the influence of the qualities of the interviewer during the so-called arrangement stage of the interview. Analyses show that the qualities of the interviewers influence the “feasibility” of the interview. It is also strongly related to the type and the size of the place in which the interviews were conducted.

Key words: survey research; questionnaire survey; interviewer effect

The validity of responses in telephone surveys (CATI)

1997, vol. 1–2 (5–6), pp. 73–92

Franciszek Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The need to conduct surveys in a short amount of time, together with the need for cost efficiency, has prompted, in Poland as elsewhere, a widespread development of a new research technique: the Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI).

The first volume of ASK 1996 published a study discussing the rules for conducting interviews using this technique. The present article discusses the influence of the way data is obtained when using CATI on the answers provided by respondents – private persons. We examine this relationship from four perspectives: respondent anonymity, interviewer effect, the circumstances surrounding the conducting of the survey and the specificity of telephone contact.

Key words: Computer assisted telephone interview (CATI); respondent anonymity; interviewer effect

Is occupation a valid index of social position among non-working respondents?

1997, vol.1–2 (5–6), pp. 93–107

Henryk Domański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The article tries to answer the question to what extent information concerning the occupation of respondents who aren't employed at the time of the interview can be used as indicators of their social position. In sociological analyses this is a common practice. However, the condition for its suitability is the similarity between members of the same professional categories: the employed and unemployed in terms of the characteristics of their social position. The results of my analyses, which rely on data from the Polish General Social Survey, point to the fact that work is a differentiating factor. This means that including respondents who work and those who don't within the same category (because of their identification of their last job) weakens the validity of occupation as an index of social position. In my conclusions, I nonetheless point to situations in which the criteria for validity ought to be examined within a broader context – that of theoretical and analytical gains, which explain the inclusion of unemployed respondents in our analyses.

Key words: social status; Polish General Social Survey (PGSS)

Rules for presenting survey research results in the press, with a special focus on election surveys

1997, vol.1–2 (5–6), pp. 109–114

Antoni Sulek, Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw

The results of public opinion survey research are an important form of social information. They help satisfy the public's curiosity about social affairs, they provide societies with a knowledge of themselves and are used as arguments in public debates. Surveys of political attitudes and pre-election polls are especially

relevant. The citizens of democratic countries have the right to access information – and a right to access truthful information. The press is an important client of public opinion polls and the main disseminator of its results. Consequently, they have the responsibility to protect that right. Public opinion polls are conducted with the use of precise research techniques – the results should be presented with equal precision. The following rules are based on the general rules of survey result presentation, on the detailed rules for the presentation of scientific research survey results, on internationally recognized regulations concerning the publication of surveys in the press and on analyses of Polish journalistic practice in the matter of relating public opinion poll results.

Key words: survey research; election; election survey; public opinion; attitudes; political attitudes

Religion as an independent variable: Revisiting Weber's hypothesis

1998, vol. 7, pp. 7–16

Daniel H. Krymkowski and Luther H. Martin, University of Vermont, USA

Studies in the sociology of religion generally assume “religion” to be causal with little or no attention paid to the theoretical justification or basis for such a claim. We argue in this paper that most such studies fail to satisfy the conditions for causal inference. Weber, whom sociologists of religion often cite when theoretical claims are made, at worst never proposes religion as an independent variable and, at best, is very ambiguous on the issue. We suggest that recent directions in cognitive psychology might form the basis for further research concerning the social significance of religion.

Key words: religion; Weber; causal inferences; cognitive psychology

Contemporary interviewers' strategies and attitudes vs respondents' reactions and new fears

1998, vol. 7, pp. 17–36

Krystyna Lutyńska, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This article is devoted to the relationship between interviewers and respondents in questionnaire surveys and the consequences of such relations for the entire study. It relies on data collected during the observation of interviewers and respondents over the course of 58 interviews. The data reveals that contemporary interviewers commit numerous basic errors (which influence the validity of the data) and often don't follow the rules of professional ethics. It was also observed that the interviewers

often refer to the use of “strategies” with their respondents, often taking on the part of an ‘important official, referring to the respondents haughtily. They also tend to differentiate this behavior based on the respondents’ financial income, education, culture and place of residence. The attitudes and behavior of respondents are also conditioned psychosocially and culturally. I observed that respondents no longer exhibit fears of a political nature in the course of the interviews, but are reluctant to reveal their true financial situation for fear of embarrassing themselves in front of the interviewer (these arise from, among other, a conviction about their lack of education, competence, etc). Certain interviewer attitudes violate respondents’ privacy and increase their misgivings about the interview – especially in the countryside and in poorer and less educated areas.

Key words: surveys; validity; qualitative; ethics; interviewer effects

The presence of third parties in surveys using computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI)

1998, vol. 7, pp. 37–46

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

In Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) the circumstances in which the respondent provides his/her answers remain entirely outside of the researcher’s control, especially when a third party is present during the interview. Yet, research from questionnaire interviews shows that the presence of third parties can significantly influence the responses. This article discusses the results of a methodological study which tries to answer the question of whether third parties can influence the answers given by respondents in CATI interviews.

Key words: survey; computer assisted telephone interview (CATI)

Constructivism as a methodological orientation in social research

1999, vol. 8, pp. 7–28

Andrzej Zybertowicz, Instytut Socjologii UMK

Constructivism is a relatively new phenomenon within the analysis of knowledge, although one that is already multi-dimensional. Since it breaks with a number of our long entrenched cognitive intuitions, its systematic explanation would require very elaborate reasoning. My goal here is more modest: I wish to present the specificity of the constructivist conception of knowledge in its methodological dimension. Those interested in further explanations are referred to the bibliography. My understanding of constructivism is expounded more broadly in the book

Przemoc i poznanie: studium z nie-klasycznej socjologii wiedzy. Zybertowicz 1995: also 1997. I believe constructivism is a methodologically relevant concept, because it identifies empirical mechanisms which condition cognitive successes in science. More specifically, it achieves results which particular scientific circles will consider successful.

Key words: constructivism, cognitive science

Survey studies in the 1990s against the background of postwar methodology

1999, vol. 8, pp. 29–42

Krystyna Lutyńska, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

My discussion will be of a meditative nature with some recollection. Indeed, it appears that many of us presently feel the need to learn more about the postwar history of Polish sociology, and among other features, of its methodology – this is proved by, among others, the work on the history of sociology carried out by Włodzimierz Winławski or the 1998 conference organized by Antoni Sulek on “The birth of public opinion studies in Poland.” Remembering at least part of this history will allow us to approach our current research from a fresh angle and a broader perspective.

Key words; history of methodology; history of sociology; public opinion

On the need to revitalize monographic studies. A new methodological challenge for academic sociology

1999, vol. 8, pp.43–50

Władysław Kwaśniewicz, Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University

The basic premise of this article is the belief that sociology in Poland, dominated by survey techniques as it is, is unable to answer the main questions concerning our changing social reality, and when it does, it is in an oversimplified manner. This article is an attempt to point to possibilities which lie in the field of monographic studies, underlining their anchoring in sociological theory and their applicability. The article concludes with an emphasis on the fact that we are witnesses to the appearance of a certain turn in the methodological consciousness of sociologists towards the appreciation of procedures relying on monographic studies, but this revival cannot happen too soon. The article calls as well for a revision of teaching programs at universities and for the support of research financing institutions.

Key words: monographic studies; sociological theory; teaching methodology

Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI): What are the gains and what are the losses?

1999, vol. 8, pp. 51–66

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) have many organizational and financial advantages. In comparison with questionnaire surveys, they are cost- and time-effective, they favor the standardization of the behavior of interviewers, help limit error and better control work. Regardless of all the above, we must study the value of surveys conducted with this technique. This article, relying on empirical analyses, examines two problems relevant for this evaluation: (1) to what extent does the CATI sample differ from the samples from questionnaire surveys and (2) do CATI surveys yield similar responses to those obtained in questionnaire studies, and if so, in what way?

Key words: CATI; surveys; fieldwork control

Inaccessible respondents. Do they affect survey research?

1999, vol. 8, pp. 67–92

Henryk Domański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This article attempts to determine the extent of the influence of inaccessible persons on survey research. Relying on data from the Polish General Social Survey (PGSS) from 1994 and data from a complementary study on inaccessible persons, I provide answers to two questions: (1) are inaccessible persons significantly different from the actual sample and (2) how strongly and in what way does their absence affect our conclusions? The relationships which are the subject of my analysis concern social stratification and selected attitudes. The conclusion is surprising, since in none of the cases did inaccessible persons have any considerable influence on the results of the study. Even though the respondents who didn't find themselves in the PGSS-94 sample differed significantly from the respondents who were interviewed, there was no reflection of this in the force or the patterns of the relationships which describe the level of education, occupational position, income and opinions or the desired model role of women.

Key words: Polish General Social Survey (PGSS); non-response; sample bias

I-sort procedure and its characteristics based on studies of social identity in Poland and Russia

2000, vol. 9, pp. 7–38

Krzysztof Kosela, Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw

Social identity explains human attitudes, opinions and behaviors. My goal was to prepare measurement standards for identity recognition that would be appropriate for the study of large groups of individuals. In the following discussion, this procedure is referred to as I-sort. The social identity of every person is a system which would certainly prompt many interesting comments from a psychologist. However, I-sort prompts the following: “who are you, what is important to you, and the researcher will tell you what society you live in”. Moving from registered social identities to the aggregate of identification, i.e. the specific concoction whose analysis allows us to compare societies, calls for a methodological discussion.

Key words: social identity; I-sort; Poland; Russia

Individual in-depth analysis and focus group interviews – a comparative analysis

2000, vol. 8, pp. 39–50

Magdalena Nicińska, F-Squared Market Research and Consulting, Warsaw, Poland

Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) and Individual in-Depth Interviews (IDIs) are techniques used most commonly in qualitative marketing research. The differences between them, which I discuss below, boil down to collecting data of a different nature, which is why they serve different goals for the researchers. It is also a matter of different contexts – if the study subject or persons involved in the study require that the respondents be within a group, then the appropriate technique will be the focus group. These serve as exploratory studies, when we need to find out a possibly full (aggregated rather than complete) scope of behaviors and consumer attitudes. We also use focus groups for certain pragmatic reasons, among which are data collecting speed and the possibility of studying a relatively large number of creative ideas. Individual in-depth interviews, on the other hand, are used for studies on the experiences of the individual. They are also used in situations where, due to the topic (intimate subjects or subjects strongly under the influence of group judgment) or the traits of the persons studied (great susceptibility to group pressure), we wish to eliminate the influence of the group.

Key words: focus groups; in-depth interviews; consumer attitudes

Sensitive topics in sociological studies in Poland

2000, vol. 9, pp. 51–63

Krystyna Lutyńska, Polish Academy of Sciences

The article comprises two parts: (1) a theoretical part which describes the concept of sensitivity and (2) an empirical section based on literature and the author's own research. The article discusses some of the issues concerning sensitive questions in quantitative and qualitative studies. Specifically, I was interested in the psycho-social emotions raised by sensitive questions under the communist regime and in the 1990s. The studies show that currently the most sensitive questions relate to income, earnings, financial status, additional work, savings, financial situation etc. These are subjects which are most often lied about by the respondents ("defensive lying"). In my conclusion, I discuss the influence of sensitive questions on the validity of our results.

Key words: sensitive topics; qualitative; quantitative; Communism; emotions

Respondent availability

2000, vol. 9, strony 65–76

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SMG/KRC Poland Media SA

The subject of this article is the availability of respondents in survey research. The problem isn't new and has been repeatedly discussed in the literature. It remains relevant and important, however, at least because it is the main condition for survey realization itself. Researchers are still worried about decreasing rates of survey response which could question – both – the conclusions drawn from the survey and the very reasons for their realization. My analyses are based on data from the national survey research of 1998 on a representative sample of persons over 15 years of age. The research was carried out for 12 months, and 36 thousand respondents were questioned during its course. The study was executed by SGM/KRC Poland Media and commissioned by three publishers: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita* and *Super Express*. The results show a systematic relationship between the demographic qualities of respondents and their availability. My analysis assumed searching for those qualities of respondents which could explain their availability. In accordance with intuition, the elderly were more available, as well as persons with a lesser income and inhabitants of small towns. I also tried to describe a seasonal phenomenon concerning respondent availability – it appears

that there are slightly better chances for conducting interviews with respondents in the first months of the year and during weekends.

Key words: non-response; surveys; demographic groups

The influence of “It’s hard to say” on analyses of results

2000, vol. 9, pp. 77–93

Henryk Domański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

By relying on a number of concrete examples I will try to answer the question of whether accounting for the category “it’s hard to say” has any bearing on the result of analyses. Several decades of the history of methodological studies have not yielded any unambiguous answers on how to deal with this basic problem. The analyses presented below relate to the Polish context, and specifically to the national survey of 1998. The basic question is the following: does omitting the category at the stage of analyses change anything? I attempt to answer this question on the basis of examples of attitudes analyzed by many previous authors. It would appear that in the case of variables identifying self-reliance, tolerance of irritating behaviors, acceptance for women joining the workforce and support for social welfare policies, omitting the category “It’s hard to say” (as it appears from the conclusions below) does not influence survey conclusions. It does not affect the reliability or the validity of the scale, nor does it impact the strength of the relationships between variables.

Key words: surveys; don’t know; tolerance; welfare attitudes; scale validity

Indicator selection

2001, vol. 10, pp.

Henryk Domański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The article offers an overview of the classic issues that confront the researcher when selecting indicators. It discusses, in turn: (1) the assumptions which lie at the basis of the theory of indicators, (2) the place of indicators against the issue of measurement, (3) problems concerning their selection, (4) issues of validity and reliability which concern the assessment of the value of indicators and finally, (5) new trends in the methodology of indicators. The article relies on the classical premises of the neo-positivist paradigm: first, that one can define the meaning of social phenomena under investigation only in terms of empirical indicators,

and second, that sociological research should be seen as a process simultaneously unfolding on the levels of theory and data analysis, i.e. in the construction of theoretical concepts and subsequent selection of indicators.

Key words: survey indicators research; validity and reliability; positivism

An analysis of data from focus group interviews in marketing research

2001, vol. 10, pp. 25–47

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Focus Group Interviews have been gaining popularity and are now offered by the majority of companies performing market research in Poland. This method is still treated by many researchers and clients as an easy and intuitive one that provides answers to basic research questions relatively quickly and cheaply. However, even if a certain amount of progress has been made in terms of the preliminary stages of focus group interviews, the data analysis stage remains neglected. It is often treated as a process requiring solely researcher experience and intuition and not binding standards. The goal of this article is to act as a reminder of those basic standards, and, most importantly, to emphasize the need for subjecting qualitative data analysis to the rule of systematic and intersubjective verifiability. Indeed, ignoring those rules leads to the formulation of unjustified conclusions and, as a result, to bad marketing decisions.

Key words: focus groups; qualitative analyses; marketing research

Computer aided qualitative content analysis: Software characteristics

2001, vol. 10, pp. 49–63

Katarzyna Maria Wilk, The Ohio State University

The traditional approach to qualitative data analysis precludes any significant input from computers in interpreting research data. However, qualitative data analysis supported by computer software is becoming more and more popular in ethnography, hermeneutics and narrative studies. In this paper, I present different types of software that might be used in content analysis. I will try to show that these types of software incorporate traditional procedures used by generations of researchers. They are also efficient, faster and they significantly reduce the number of errors. In conclusion, I note that using these software packages enables the researcher to maintain control of decision making in qualitative data analysis and that the intersubjectivity produced by the software leads to consistency in data interpretation.

Key words: qualitative analysis software; narrative studies; intersubjectivity

Computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI): Is this really the ideal technique?

2001, vol. 10, pp. 65–89

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Personal interviews with the support of computer software appear to connect the advantages of CATI with the merits of traditional face-to-face interviews. Is it then really the ideal research technique? The aim of this article is to familiarize Polish researchers with a technique that remains very little known in Poland and to point the obvious advantages for personal interviews, as well as the potential dangers it carries. I begin with a general classification of the various techniques of computer assisted interview techniques; next, I discuss the technical and social aspects of CAPI, i.e. the consequences of the introduction of a computer from the point of view of the interviewer and the respondent, the value of the data obtained and the opportunities for interviewer control this technique gives.

Key words: computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI); computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI); data quality

What do we know about our respondents? Size and source of errors in background variables

2001, vol. 10, pp. 91–114

Paweł Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Questions concerning socio-demographic features of respondents (i.e., background variables) are built into each questionnaire schedule. They serve not only to characterize the group studied, but also to describe its differentiation. One should assume, however, that important information is usually burdened with error. The goal of this article is to establish the size of this error and its sources. I define error in terms of differences between answers given by the same respondent to the same question in two interviews. The data comes from control research from national surveys based on random samples carried out between 1997–2000. All in all, it includes 7029 randomly selected control interviews from 83 surveys. Analyses lead me to conclude the widespread scope of error. However, it differs in different types of variables. Errors mainly results from: poor memory of the respondents, tendency to give socially desirable answers and a lack of knowledge (e.g. about the income of family members). The results obtained are discussed against the background of comparable data (including verification data), where data assessment is made based on a comparison with documentation data.

Key words: background variables; survey error; data quality

Interviews with photographs in sociological research methodology and social practice

2002, vol. 11, pp. 7–26

Krzysztof Olechnicki and **Tomasz Szlendak**, Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, Poland

The goal of this article is to advocate the use of photographs in interviews for research purposes in social studies and social practice, including advertising and social work. The article strongly emphasizes the point that photography is a very helpful tool in all the stages of the research process not only in visual sociology (where this method has so far found the greatest use), but for nearly every researcher interested in culture and the social world. It is also suitable for professionals in social practice who primarily use quantitative techniques nowadays that are widespread and considered more scientific. The article therefore joins the continuing discussion over the status of quantitative methods in sociological methodology, and encourages readers to take a closer look at photography, a soft technique that has been “refreshed” and developed contemporarily, with a particular mention of its usefulness in social practice.

Key words: interviews with photographs; visual sociology; methodology; quantitative methods

Identifying measurement errors in structural equation model interdependencies

2002, vol. 11, pp. 27–44

Henryk Domański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The development of quantitative analysis was accompanied from the beginning by analyses devoted to the problem of error measurement, focusing mostly on methods of error identification. In the analyses provided in this article, I begin with an overview of the methods and their respective advantages and drawbacks. I demonstrate that the greatest possibilities in this field (relatively speaking) lie with confirmatory factor analyses and structural models. Based on the Polish national survey research, I present data suggesting the advantage of controlling errors by using confirmatory factor analysis, which allows one to increase the validity and reliability of measurements in comparison with traditional approaches. Selected examples concern the relationship between social position and attitudes, which have always been at the heart of empirical research.

Key words: survey error; confirmatory factor analysis

The middle point in bipolar scales: Should it be included or dropped from the scale?

2002, vol. 11, pp. 45–81

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Middle-point answers in bipolar scales measuring the attitudes of individuals are chosen by 3 to 50% of respondents. Therefore, the decision to include them as answer choices is not a light matter. There is no agreement among researchers concerning this issue. Analyses presented below show how far the introduction of a middle point on a four point scale changes the placement of the remaining answers over the remaining points, including the “It’s hard to say” answer. I also try to determine which of the scales is better, i.e. to assess the phenomenon in terms of reliability and validity. To conclude, I present an interpretation of the results by referring to a popular understanding of the scales by respondents.

Key words: attitudes; middle-point answer; bipolar scale; reliability analysis; regression analysis; discriminant analysis

Remarks on the discovery, collection and assessment of hidden and dirty data

2003, vol. 12, pp. 7–50

Gary T. Marx, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, MIT, USA

This article is devoted to the subject of dirty data, which is understood as secret and compromising information. The author analyzes factors which contribute to the fact that a greater number of researchers are interested in this type of data and presents typical situations which dirty data researchers may face. He also discusses a number of methodological, ethical and institutionalized forms of coercion that are at the disposal of dirty data researchers. The author distinguishes basic research techniques and compares them in terms of cost, representativeness, required skill sets and potential range of topics covered. Finally, from the perspective of sociology of knowledge, the article discusses the issues of the relationship between researchers and scientific circles, sociologists and other professionals facing the problem of dirty data and researchers and political institutions.

Key words: dirty data; ethics; sociology of knowledge

The researcher as co-author of study results

2003, vol. 12, pp. 51–83

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

When preparing survey research, one must make a number of decisions which might affect the results of the study and which are equally justifiable from the perspective of our current methodological knowledge. The article tries to show the consequences of these choices for the research. These concern the two phases of preparation of survey research: research technique selection and questionnaire construction.

Key words: ethics; survey design

An analysis of the usefulness of the EGP approach as an indicator of social position

2003, vol. 12, pp. 85–116

Henryk Domański and **Dariusz Przybysz**, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The goal of this article is to present EGP: the international indicator of the social position of individuals. This is the most frequently used schema of data coding in international comparative studies concerning social stratification and class structure. We begin by discussing the theoretical foundations for its construction and operationalization in a variable form introduced to the analysis in order to answer specific problems. Next, we try to answer the question of the extent to which the EGP indicator is an adequate tool for the Polish context. Data from the Polish edition of the 2002 European Social Survey on a national population sample is the empirical basis for our analyses. Relying on this data, we first analyze the discrimination power of the EGP with respect to particular variables: social status, lifestyle and attitudes, and then we compare our results with the Polish professional classification. These analyses lead us to the conclusion that the EGP distinguishes respondents similarly to the Polish schema. In order to simplify the legibility of the EGP for the reader, we attach an SPSS file in the annex which allows one to attach it to any set of data.

Key words: social class; European Social Survey; EGP

Consistency of answers on bipolar scales with different numbers of categories

2003, vol. 12, pp. 117–145

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The subject of this article is the analysis of the cognitive availability of measurement scales based on a comparison of answers which respondents give to identically formulated questions with scales that have different numbers of categories. The measure of cognitive control over the scales presented to the respondent is inferred from the consistency of his answers. A scale that is difficult to master will have answers that are inconsistent with answers given in other scales. The article first discusses the formal definition of consistency and the method of constructing a model for the level of non-accidental consistency of answers. It then presents the results of an empirical study conducted on a group of students participating in a statistical data analysis class. These initially confirm the hypothesis that the more categories there are, the more difficulty respondents have with a scale.

Key words: bipolar scale; experiment; survey design

The reasoning of the researcher and the reasoning of the respondent. Research tool adequacy

2003, vol. 12, pp. 147–175

Franciszek Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This article deals with the adequacy of our research tools. By differentiating the different aspects of adequacy, namely the methodological, psychological and sociological dimensions, I point to the fact that these problems pertain to the measurement tools both in a broad and in a narrow sense (the survey method as well as individual questions). In the second half of the article, after analyzing empirical data, I describe the consequences of the inadequacy of specific types of questions which nonetheless are fully acceptable from a design perspective – namely questions in which a ten point scale (from 10 to 1) is used. I rely on the results of 7 surveys conducted by a market research institute for a single project, concerning 5 very different dairy products. Each of the studies was conducted along the same pattern on a sample ranging from 300 to 450 persons. This analysis shows that there were similar patterns of response in each question which used the 10 point scale, regardless of the question subject and the type of product they concerned. The highest percentages appear on points 10, 8, 5 and 1 of the scale. This similarity suggests that all these answers carry a bias whose source is the inadequacy of the

research tool (the question). This hypothesis is supported by the results of the PGSS study, in which identical scales are used. We can therefore conclude that it is most likely the type of scale, and not the subject of the question that suggests the answer profiles of the respondents. In other words, it appears that by using this type of scale, regardless of the question subject, we obtain a multimodal characteristic pattern, and not a unimodal pattern. The type of tool (question) used was inadequate: instead of reporting the respondents' opinions to researchers, to a certain extent, it guided them, generating a specific model for answering questions.

Key words: Polish General Social Survey (PGSS); surveys; response bias; scales; instrumental validity

The European Social Survey and other international surveys: What can one learn from comparative analysis?

2004, vol. 13, pp. 9–25

Kazimierz M. Słomczyński, The Ohio State University, USA

The European Social Survey (ESS) is a potentially important research undertaking for the field of social studies, and especially sociology. In order, however, to discuss the potential future gains of this study, it is worth first taking a look at other international survey research – academic and commercial – and their use. The article discusses the following research undertakings: the World Values Survey (WVS), the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), Eurobarometer (EB), the New Barometer (NB), and the Global Barometer (GLOB), International End of Year Poll (IEYP), Voice of the People (VoP) and the Pew Global Attitudes Project (GAP). ESS was compared to other projects because of the topics discussed in the questionnaires and the method of conducting the survey. The article also presents information about the availability of data from international survey research and describes the methodological challenges concerning the measurement of variables and the analysis of their causal relations.

Key words: cross-national surveys; European Social Survey; World Values Survey; International Social Survey Program; data availability

The methodology of the European Social Survey

2004, vol. 13, pp. 27–37

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

One of the basic goals of the ESS study is to develop standards for the preparation and realization of international studies. This article discusses ESS standards for

two stages of the study, which may potentially pose the greatest risk of errors in the results, i.e. the construction and administration of the questionnaire and research, and specifically efforts aimed at maximizing response rates.

Key words: European Social Survey; survey design

Log-linear models for ordinal data. Some examples.

2004, vol. 13, pp. 51–85

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The article presents an analysis of the joint distribution of random variables and their relationships using log-linear models. Special attention is paid to situations in which at least one variable is measured on an ordinal scale. I formulate a number of hypotheses concerning log-linear models, as well as methods for testing hypotheses concerning them. I also present examples of empirical analyses of data from the 2002 edition of the European Social Survey. These show that using information about ordering categories of one or more variables allows for the formulation of models which fit the empirical data well.

Key words: log linear models; ordinal scales; European Social Survey

An analysis of change using latent growth curve analysis

2004, vol. 13, pp. 87–120

Roman Konarski, University of Gdańsk

The traditional approach to analysis of change processes was based on the assumption that change is a series of (M)ANOVA quantum differences in the functioning of individuals between arbitrarily chosen measurement points. Such a concept of change is a model of moderate change in which inter-individual differences are examined as a residue unexplained by the (M)ANOVA model. This article suggests a latent growth curve analysis which expands on the traditional (M)ANOVA approach by characterizing change as a continuous process, with certain differentiating characteristics between persons. Such an approach to the analysis of the processes of change allows one to test developmental hypotheses referring to the correlation between initial status and the tempo of change, as well as factors explaining inter-individual differentiation in the initial status and/or tempo of change. The article gives statistical grounds for a model of latent growth curve analysis within the convention of a general model of structural equations and illustrates the implementation of this statistical model in an empirical study of the effectiveness of a dietary supplement on the cognitive functioning of persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The paper

also discusses the limitations of the model of latent growth curve analysis in the analysis of incomplete developmental data, as well as research plans combining the characteristics of longitudinal and latitudinal plans.

Key words: latent growth curve analysis; MANOVA; cognitive functioning

On the need for the protection of qualitative data. From the experience of a sociologist-humanist

2005, vol. 14, pp. 7–17

Hanna Palska, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The article justifies the needs for the creation of a sociological archive for qualitative data in Poland. I refer to the history of archives of Polish memoirs – collected mostly by Józef Chałasiński and his disciples – which have been for the most part destroyed and scattered. Nowadays, in the age of digital technology, we must and we can gather memoirs, autobiographies, in-depth interviews, all personal documents, broadly understood. This can be done in a relatively cheap and easy manner. Securing data from qualitative surveys ought to become the final, compulsory stage of empirical fieldwork.

Key words: memoir studies; qualitative; archiving

The archive of social qualitative data: Needs, controversies, practical suggestions

2005, vol. 14, pp. 19–29

Artur Kościański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

This article presents the basic arguments for the creation of a library (archive) of “qualitative data”, the rising controversies over this matter and suggests certain practical methodological solutions. The author relies on Robert K. Merton’s arguments, and emphasizes the need for classifying and integrating the knowledge gained from qualitative data analysis through archiving. This is how the function of “a well-ordered theoretical knowledge” will be met. Therefore, when designing an archive of qualitative data one should bear in mind, apart from the recording function of the research material gathered, other functions which should be fulfilled by sociological knowledge ordered along paradigms, i.e. a verifying function, preventing the spread of unverified conclusions; a cumulative function of interpretation of phenomena; a cross control of concepts function which allows one to go beyond often simply descriptive analyses and construct coherent theories; and finally, a codifying function, ordering the analytical process as an element

of the objectification of some of the analytical procedures. Such an archive of qualitative data would bring scientific information not just to sociology, but to different disciplines of knowledge about man.

Key words: archiving; qualitative data

Why archive qualitative data and how it is done elsewhere in the world

2005, vol. 14, pp. 31–52

Piotr Filipkowski, Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences

The aim of this article is to spark a discussion about the creation of a Polish Archive of Qualitative Data. In the first part, I present the main arguments for the archiving and subsequent reuse of qualitative data in social sciences. I rely on Paul Thompson's experiment – a precursor of oral history, researcher of social history, sociologist of the family and creator of the model archive of qualitative data in the UK. In subsequent parts, I present in more detail two important European archives: the British *Qualidata* and the German *Deutsches Gedächtnis*, treating them as model institutions for the Polish archive. The last section of this article is devoted to a presentation of a catalogue of the biggest European institutions archiving qualitative data – not only those with the formal status of national archives, but also of smaller ones, which remain important undertakings nonetheless. In the last section, I remind the readers of the rich Polish traditions in qualitative studies and of the first, though at present not-scientific, archiving initiatives.

Key words: archiving; qualitative data

How to combine pre-test and pilot study? The example of the 2004 European Social Survey

2005, vol. 14, pp. 55–75

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Studies of the quantitative/survey research type are usually preceded by pilot studies. This article demonstrates how both types of studies can be combined within one research undertaking: a pre-test and pilot study. The former is carried out on a small number of samples, and its results are analyzed quantitatively. The latter is conducted on samples of several hundred persons and analyzed qualitatively. The original methodology of an initial study prepared specifically for ESS research relies on a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses and lets us overcome the constraints of a pre-test and pilot study.

Key words: pre-test; pilot study; survey design; European Social Survey

**Why do respondents chose to participate in surveys?
A comparison 1994–2004.**

2006, vol. 15, pp. 7–28

Paweł B. Sztabiński, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

In 1994, I sent a questionnaire to the respondents-participants of the Polish General Social Survey. It concerned the motivations for their participation in surveys and their interpretation of its goals. I discussed its results in the 1995 edition of “ASK”. Since then, many important changes have taken place, both within society as in the field of research, which I assumed could significantly modify the results then presented. I was prompted to repeat this survey a decade later, in 2004, in conjunction with the European Social Survey. The goals of my questionnaire were similar to those of the 1994 one, namely, to determine how Polish society views survey research after a dozen years of living in a functioning democratic system and to establish what convinces respondents to participate in surveys. Because of the current significance of the second goal mentioned above, this study was broadened to include a questionnaire for respondents who had not taken part in the survey for a variety of reasons.

Key words: non-response; survey design; European Social Survey

Number of visits and duration of surveys

2006, vol. 15, pp. 29–49

Henryk Domański, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Relying on data from the European Social Survey I attempt to provide an answer to two questions. First, to which group of factors does respondent availability belong to (availability is defined as the number of visits attempted by the interviewer in order to establish contact). Second, to what extent do the answers of respondents depend on the point of time in which the survey is carried out. My analyses of the role of these factors are based on data from Poland. The appearance of such interdependencies would suggest that measurements are burdened with a systematic error, i.e. the changing of the context of the study. The influence of time was proof that during the research, conditions surrounding the interviews change. My analyses show that the following factors make availability more difficult: higher education, big city inhabitants and young age. In contrast, it is relatively easy to reach unemployed persons, inhabitants of the countryside, and lower-rank non-manual workers. If we consider the assumption that the date of

the interview has any independent influence over the study – it appears that such a dependency is indeed present.

Key words: non-response, interview duration, number of visits, sampling; systematic error

Using quantitative methods in marketing research in Poland

2006, vol. 15, pp. 51–73

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When carrying out quantitative research one should apply different types of statistical methods and techniques. The number and complexity of some of these methods means that what is theoretically described in the literature is rarely used in practice. This article presents the results of a project assessing the extent to which quantitative methods are being implemented in marketing research in Poland. The analysis was based on interviews conducted with representatives of selected social and marketing research agencies in 2004. Our goal was to show (1) which of the quantitative methods are commonly used in marketing research in Poland, and which ones are not, and to identify the possible reasons for this; (2) what are the situations (and to what research problems) quantitative methods are mostly used for; (3) how the use of different quantitative methods in marketing research has changed in Poland in the last years; (4) what are the problems connected with the use of different quantitative methods and how to remedy them; (5) what are the prognostics concerning the development of research in the coming years.

Key words: statistical methods; marketing research; Poland

Methods of ecological inference in electoral research

2006, vol. 15, pp. 75–103

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In the social sciences the researcher often has a dearth of aggregated data, and no data about individuals. Conclusions from analyses of this aggregated data are, however, burdened with what was described as the “ecological fallacy” – when they concern individuals. In such instances, one can rely on methods of ecological inference which help estimate individual behaviors and characteristics with great accuracy based on aggregated data. This article presents the most popular methods of ecological inference using a regressive and logistical approach. The overview begins with an analysis of Goodman’s ecological regression, and ends with the relatively new approach known as entropy maximization. The methods presented

here are by no means exhaustive. They are, however, the most popular and most frequently discussed ones. The aim of this article is to familiarize the Polish reader with these approaches.

Key words: ecological analysis; aggregated data analysis; Goodman's ecological regression; entropy maximization

An assessment of the quality of a scale with the Rasch model: Validity and reliability

2006, vol.15, pp. 107–131

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The aim of this article is to present a statistical analysis method little known so far in Poland: the Rasch model, and in particular, its use in the assessment of the validity and reliability of a cumulative measurement scale. This measurement is an alternative to the methods used so far in Poland to assess validity and reliability, and described by David Magnusson, Jerzy Brzeziński, Jarosław Górniak, Andrzej Machowski and Adam Sagan among others. These methods can only be applied to scales with parallel locations, while the measurements obtained with the Rasch model can help assess scales of different intensities. The first section of this article presents the methodological basis of the Rasch model, before proceeding to examine the practical implementation of this technique. It is worth emphasizing that since Rasch's family of models is numerous, this article focuses specifically on the rating scale model, which is useful in the measurement of latent traits on rating scales with different intensities (cumulative scales).

Key words: Rasch model; Rasch scale; Rasch ordinal scale; ordinal scale; validity of a measurement scale; reliability of a measurement scale

The impact of unfinished sections of interviews on the accuracy of statistical inference in social studies. Questionnaire surveys and telephone surveys in light of errors.

2007, vol.16, pp. 67–86

Piotr Jabkowski, Adam Mickiewicz University

The article concerns the subject of inaccessible individuals within the theory of statistical conclusion. I focus on the consequences for statistical analysis of not including non-sampling errors arising from the lack of knowledge of the distribution of opinions of persons whom for various reasons have been omitted in the research process, even though they had earlier been (randomly) chosen for the sample. The article shows that non-sampling errors arising from not conducting a part of the

sample (if they are not effectively restrained) affect the entire cognitive process to such an extent that drawing any kind of reasonable conclusions becomes practically impossible. The article comprises three interrelated parts. The first formulates the problem of not conducting a part of the sample and gives theoretical statistical foundations for further discussion. The second section provides procedures of assessing non-accidental errors of measurement arising from not conducting the initially agreed on survey sample. Part three critically analyzes two quantitative research techniques – telephone surveys and questionnaire surveys.

Key words: sampling; survey design; survey errors, telephone surveys

Computer assisted qualitative data analysis

2007, vol.16, pp. 89–114

Jacek Bieliński, Collegium Civitas, **Katarzyna Iwińska**, Collegium Civitas, and **Anna Rosińska-Kordasiewicz**, University of Warsaw

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research not only in the epistemological approach to the subject but also in the tools used. Qualitative researchers point to the importance of being “in contact with empirical material”. It is the main argument against using computers when performing analyses. Nevertheless, advanced computer tools have also been used in qualitative research for the past dozen years. Such programs are built to help and ease contact with the studied material through cataloguing, classifying and also advanced search options. They also facilitate, among other things, the exploration of phenomena, the analysis and presentation of synthesized data. This article’s main concern is to demonstrate the use of specialist computer programs in the analysis of qualitative data, and in particular two such programs: QSR N6 (formerly: NUD*IST) and ATLAS.ti.

Key words: computer analysis; qualitative data; ATLAS.ti; NUD*IST.

Excessive internet use risk scales

2007, vol. 16, pp 115–131

Katarzyna Kaliszewska, Adam Mickiewicz University

The article presents the theoretical basis and the psychometric attributes of SNUI – Excessive Internet Use Risk Scales. SNUI scales were built for the needs of empirical studies conducted in order to assess the psychological characteristics of the phenomenon of excessive use of the internet. The psychometric parameters of SNUI scales are satisfactory and allow us to believe that the tool can successfully

be used for individual research, group research and comparisons between groups over the Excessive Internet Use variable.

Key words: excessive internet use; SNUI

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